



Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair
Human Services Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
February 20, 2023

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP), I am sending this letter to support Representative Hanson's House File 1198 – family-centered children's mental health care.

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is the state's leading association for Community Mental Health Programs, representing 35 community-based mental health providers and agencies across the state. Our mission is to serve all who come to us seeking mental and chemical health services, regardless of their insurance status, ability to pay or where they live. As Essential Community Providers, we serve primarily culturally diverse, low-income, uninsured and public healthcare program insured Minnesotans, who cannot access services elsewhere. We serve our clients with comprehensive and coordinated care.

Many children and families in Minnesota do not have access to needed mental health care. Without support, too many children first gain mental health care due to a crisis, and end up needing the highest level of care – hospitalization – but often are languishing in emergency rooms. Providing access to treatment earlier would be more effective.

The majority of MACMHP member community mental health programs serve all ages - cradle to end-of-life. We also advocate to build out our system in ways that recognize and respond to families as core, nuclear units for children and communities. In this, we ask your support for this Mental Health Legislative Network proposal which reflects priorities from mental health advocates and providers as well as MACMHP to break down barriers and urgently build needed mental health services. MACMHP and its members strongly support the goals, outlined by each of the proposals, in HF 1198, including:

- Maximizing existing Medicaid benefits
- Supporting early intervention
- Building on what is proven and works for children and families
- Focusing on family supports
- Sustaining and building a family-centered continuum

Please support increasing funding to the program and House File 1198. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely

Jin Lee Palen, Executive Director
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs | MACMHP